

For Immediate Release:

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The Last Bison

Performing at the 2016

40th Annual Norfolk Harborfest®

The Largest, Longest-Running, FREE Maritime Festival in the Nation!

June 9-12, 2016 on the Downtown Norfolk Waterfront

Norfolk, Virginia (February 26, 2016) –Norfolk Festevents announces National Recording Artist The Last Bison to appear on the main stage Saturday, June 11, 2016, at the 40th Annual Norfolk Harborfest® at Town Point Park, along the Downtown Norfolk Waterfront, Virginia.

The 40th Annual Norfolk Harborfest® transforms the downtown Norfolk waterfront into a distinctive, FREE, family-friendly fun outdoor extravaganza stocked full with activities on land and sea! Norfolk Harborfest® includes majestic tall ships in the Parade of Sail, one of the largest waterfront fireworks shows on the East Coast, local, regional and national entertainment, family activities, unique and unusual performances, water activities and much more.

National Recording Artist The Last Bison to appear Saturday, June 11, 2016, on the Main Stage:

The Last Bison

"I feel like our previous music was fall and winter music. I wanted this new album to sound more like summer. I want people to feel like they walked outside on a summer day." – Ben Hardesty

To capture the new sounds on The Last Bison's upcoming album titled VA (pronounced Virginia,) the band spent many days and nights in an old A-frame cabin. The cabin, called "the Wigwam" sits on a summer camp on the edge of the Great Dismal Swamp near the band's home in Chesapeake, Virginia. The pine-lined walls and high-lofted beams became home to a temporary studio where front man Ben Hardesty says, "We had freedom to explore and create without the time constraints we lived under on previous projects." Out of this rustic cabin emerged a collection of music with booming organic drums and energy beyond anything on their previous work.

In 2012 The Last Bison seemingly rose from the marshes of southeastern Virginia to captivate the national music scene with a rare blend of music that NPR dubbed, "Classical influenced southern folk rock." Commenting on the band's self-released debut album, Quill, a blogger for the popular music sharing site NoiseTrade remarked: "(The Last) Bison has already crafted a sound that is threaded with their own singular strands of creativity. Songs unfurl in textured, poetic waves that are based far more in inspiration than imitation." WXPN of Philadelphia noted The Last Bison "has subsequently swept the musical scene with its complex arrangements, refined lyrics and vocal harmonies."

Having drawn comparisons in the past to indie superstars the likes of Mumford & Sons, The Decemberists, and Fleet Foxes, their most recent project harvests a more dynamic, and anthemic sound from the soil of their folk roots. The addition of electric bass and keyboards to their extensive collection of acoustic instruments has been compared to Bob Dylan going electric at Newport in 1965. After a performance at Norfolk, Virginia's Harborfest, the The Daily Press commented on the new musical direction saying, "The result is a more rocking sound, though the band still remains true to its folkie roots."

Ben Hardesty, who is the primary songwriter and vocalist, recorded the drum tracks on the new album. Andrew Benfante, who has played a 1930s reed organ on previous works, adds piano to the layers, and Amos Housworth has expanded from cello to offering all the bass tracks on the project. Dan Hardesty alternates from banjo to mandolin to guitar, while he and Annah Housworth, who plays bells, provide the lush backing vocals. Teresa Totheroh's violin is the thread that sows the myriad parts together.

The 11 songs on VA reveal a band relishing in the struggle for and the discovering of freedom. When Hardesty sings, Take me with you, I can't stay here, from "She Always Waves At The Gate," and, Into the den of the shadows I've come / Far beyond what is shallow I've swum, from the dark and atmospheric "Sleep," he reveals the emotional tension of desperately desiring something beyond, while treading in new territory both thrilling and threatening. In the mysterious piano driven song "By No Means," Hardesty proclaims, I'm lost in caves that have no end / Astray in caverns that begin / Yet when explored, disorient / And I have waited patiently / To see such grace and mastery / Personified to this extent, declaring he has found something that satisfies his longing, and finds rest as he rejoices with the words, "All who are weary, come lay your burdens down" in the song "Burdens".

Following their first independent release, Quill, in 2011, The Last Bison was signed to Universal Republic Records and created the Inheritance album in 2013. The most recent project finds The Last Bison returning to their independent roots, having self-produced the project in collaboration with Media House Music. The Last Bison album, VA, is due for release September 30, 2014 with a tour to follow.



Additional Harborfest performances include:

Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Thursday, June 9, 2016
The Subdudes, Friday, June 10, 2016
Grace Potter, Friday, June 10, 2016
Rick Springfield, Saturday, June 11, 2016
Oh Honey, Saturday, June 11, 2016
The Wailers, Sunday, June 12, 2016

Additional local, regional and national performances will be announced in the coming weeks.

Festival hours: Thursday, June 9th from 8:00-10:00pm, Friday, June 10th from Noon – 11 pm, Saturday June 11th from Noon – 11 pm, and Sunday, June 12th from 10:00am – 6 pm.

The **40th Annual Norfolk Harborfest®** presented by AT&T, is produced by Norfolk Festevents, Ltd. and sponsored by the City of Norfolk.

Norfolk Festevents, Ltd., based in Norfolk, Virginia, is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating the most dynamic urban waterfront community in America through innovative programming and imaginative uses of its historic waterfront spaces. An extensive 10 month schedule of diverse outdoor cultural events, festivals, concerts, entertainment, holiday programs, tall ship visits, sports and recreation are presented in two popular and welcoming waterfront environments; Town Point Park located in downtown Norfolk on the banks of the Elizabeth River and Ocean View Beach Park situated on the shore line of the Chesapeake Bay. Norfolk Festevents has served as the City of Norfolk's official event marketing agency since the city's downtown waterfront revitalization initiatives began in 1982. The organization has garnered international acclaim for its advocacy for public access to waterfronts, outstanding quality programming and development of public spaces, transforming Norfolk into one of the most progressive, fun and livable waterfront communities in the country. Residents, workers, and visitors to Norfolk and the Hampton Roads region are invited to experience all the fun and excitement of the 2016 season!

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